

Listing of Claims

1. - 2. (Canceled)

3. (Currently amended) A transgenic plant comprising a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a PRDT1 polypeptide comprising:

a) the amino acid sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO:2;

b) an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; or

c) an *Arabidopsis* ortholog of SEQ ID NO:2, wherein the ortholog has at least ~~60~~85% sequence identity to the sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO: 2, comprises a SANT domain, and has DNA-binding activity,

wherein said transgenic plant has increased drought tolerance relative to control plants, and wherein the transformation vector comprises a drought stress-inducible promoter that controls expression of the PRDT1 polypeptide.

4. (Original) The transgenic plant of claim 3 wherein the ortholog of SEQ ID NO:2 comprises the amino acid sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO:13.

5. (Currently amended) A method of producing increased drought tolerance in a plant, said method comprising:

a) introducing into progenitor cells of the plant a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a PRDT1 polypeptide comprising an amino acid sequence as set forth as SEQ ID NO:2; an amino acid sequence having at least 95% sequence identity to the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:2; or an *Arabidopsis* ortholog of SEQ ID NO: 2, wherein the ortholog has at least ~~60~~85% sequence identity to the sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO: 2, comprises a SANT domain, and has DNA-binding activity[[,]]; and

b) growing the transformed progenitor cells to produce a transgenic plant, wherein said nucleotide sequence is expressed, and said transgenic plant exhibits increased resistance to drought tolerance, relative to control plants.

6. (Previously presented) A transformed plant obtained by the method of claim 5.

7. (Previously presented) A transformed plant part obtained from the plant according to claim 6.

8. (Withdrawn and currently amended) A method of generating the transgenic plant of claim 3, comprising identifying a plant that has an allele in the nucleotide sequence that encodes the PRDT1 polypeptide that results in increased drought tolerance compared to plants lacking the allele and generating progeny of said identified plant, wherein the generated progeny inherit the allele and have the increased ~~pathogen resistance~~ drought tolerance phenotype.

9. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 that employs candidate gene/QTL methodology.

10. (Withdrawn) The method of claim 8 that employs TILLING methodology.

11. (Previously presented) The transgenic plant of claim 3, wherein the nucleotide sequence is set forth in SEQ ID NO:1.

12. (Canceled)

13. (New) The transgenic plant of claim 4(c), wherein the *Arabidopsis* ortholog has at least 90% sequence identity over the entire length of SEQ ID NO: 2.

14. (New) The transgenic plant of claim 13, wherein the *Arabidopsis* ortholog has at least 95% sequence identity over the entire length of SEQ ID NO: 2.

15. (New) A transgenic plant comprising a plant transformation vector comprising a nucleotide sequence that encodes a PRDT1 polypeptide comprising the amino acid sequence set forth as SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 13 and a drought stress-inducible promoter that controls expression of the PRDT1 polypeptide, wherein said transgenic plant has increased drought tolerance relative to control plants.

16. (New) The method of claim 5, wherein the PRDT polypeptide comprises an amino acid sequence as set forth as SEQ ID NO: 2 or SEQ ID NO: 13.